

issue of legitimacy is important. It frames the structure of discourse, and discourse is central to ideology and struggle. Although most social historians will find the Katznelson and Zolberg collection more useful, there is something of value in both these works and they should both be read with care.

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Jean Favier — *De l'or et des épices: Naissance de l'homme d'affaires au Moyen Âge*. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1987. Pp. 482.

Jean Favier is a well-known French medievalist, professor at the Sorbonne, director of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, and Director General of the French archives. In *De l'or et des épices* Favier teaches a general audience that the truly professional businessman evolved in the western civilization during the later Middle Ages and established the capitalist commercial civilization that in the author's eyes defines Europe. The book is thus the needed historical prelude to the familiar work of Fernand Braudel, for Favier here sets out origins for the system treated in that master's great *Civilization and Capitalism: 15th-18th century* (tr. S. Reynolds, 3 vols., London, 1981-84; originally *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme: XV^e-XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, 1979).

Favier builds his case through nineteen substantive chapters, each developing a theme about the setting, personnel, organization, or operation of the commercial sector during the high and later Middle Ages. During the twelfth through fifteenth century mercantile life evolved within an economic space learned and reached by medieval traders and a social space among rulers, competitors, and strangers. Businessmen gained skills with monies, companies, credits, banks, risk, ships, and account books. They built personal careers and family fortunes, dealt with princes, and slowly shaped their own new collective identity and culture.

De l'or et des épices is richly — even luxuriously — written in narrative and anecdotal style. Favier ranges across medieval Europe to accumulate and fondly examine illustrative cases. A mere seven pages (220-26) on how medieval merchants did not specialize, for instance, treats Genoese dealings in the western Mediterranean, Levant, and Black Sea; Hanseatics carrying goods from Prussia, Russia, Scandinavia, Cornwall, Pomerania, Brittany, Bruges, and the Orient; the investments of Jacob Fugger and of Jacques Coeur; three regional trading enterprises in mid-fifteenth century Rouen; the careers of the Pratese Francesco Datini, the Venetian Andrea Barbarigo, and the Lübecker Heinrich Castorp. Brief translated extracts from evocative primary sources are often introduced. Readers already versed in scholarship on the medieval European economy will recognize Favier's familiarity with the landmark works. Others can use his substantial bibliography of major published books and sources. Confronted with a new and intriguing statement, however, all will occasionally regret the absent footnotes.

Broadly analytical interpretive history for a non-specialist audience is perhaps better-practiced on the eastern than the western side of the Atlantic. The experienced hand of Favier even here avoids the too common slip into the narrowly national that limits a book's appeal outside its homeland. General medievalists and social and economic historians of later periods in Europe or elsewhere should read *De l'or et des épices*. The book also deserves the translation into English which would permit more North American students and general readers to experience its sound and up-to-date synthesis.

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